

# THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

VOLUME XII. No. 21

THE BEACON PRESS, BOSTON, MASS.

FEBRUARY 19, 1922



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WASHINGTON LAYING HIS COMMISSION AT THE FEET OF COLUMBIA.—E. H. BLASHFIELD.

This painting is in the Court House at Baltimore, Md.

## The Pigeon of Stan Cote.

BY RUBY HOLMES MARTYN.

IN THREE PARTS.

PART ONE.

THE closely-covered rush basket had grown heavier and heavier in Wihfred's brown hand as he made his way along the rocky coves and through the fields of wild grass and bushes which lay behind the headlands that stretched like stony fingers fringed with white surf foam into the blue sea-water. It was the middle of the afternoon, and the barefooted lad with his single garment of belted goatskin had been traveling since sun-up along the lonely coast. Finally, for the second time within a few minutes, Wihfred looked up at the hot, blinding sun, and gave a whistle of relief as he put the rush basket down on a flat rock. He was glad to have honestly reached the end of the journey he had promised himself to hold steadily until mid-afternoon.

"I'll wait a bit before I toss you, Kwen," he said, perching on the edge of the rock as he pushed open a wide crack in the cover of the home-woven basket. "Here's some food and water."

The pigeon inside put out her head and cooed softly while Wihfred fed her some hard grains he had brought in his pocket. Then he uncorked the wide neck of the skin water-bottle hung from his strong belt and let the bird drink freely. The bottle was nearly empty when Kwen raised her head from it with a coo of satisfaction.

"Is that quite enough, my brave bird?" asked Wihfred. "You ought not to stop for a drink by the way, and I would have

you back at the cote before the sun sets. Fly well, my Kwen!"

As he spoke, Wihfred removed the cover of the rush basket and took the pigeon in his hand. For a long moment the bird perched on his finger preening her blue feathers, and when he tossed her up from his hand she rose circling through the sunny air.

"Fly well, my Kwen!" cried Wihfred, straining his eyes to watch as the bird flew in wider and wider circles so far over his head that she was but a speck in the vivid blue. "This is the last trial for you—and a test of my strength and skill, too!" he added thoughtfully. "If you reach the stan cote before the sun sets, I am ready for service with thethane. Fly well, my Kwen!"

For several months Wihfred had been training the pigeon to fly back from the tossing-points to the stone hut where he had lived alone with his brother Leof since their grandfather died. It was the lad's duty to care for the herd of goats belonging to thethane and which were pastured at that lonely spot; but to his goatherd duties Wihfred added the care and training of a little flock of carrier pigeons and some hawks which he took as small birds from their nest among the rocks. He loved birds, and had always meant, when he was old and strong enough, to live at the house of thethane and help care for the splendid falcons kept there.

From a fledgling Kwen had seemed the best carrier of all Wihfred's pigeons. Each day he could find time, the lad had carried her farther from the home cote, and at each trial she had found her way back with unfailing promptness. To-day Wihfred had brought Kwen the greatest

distance of all, and was himself farther from home than he had ever been before. The rocks and the hills here were strangers to him, and he was anxious to get back to familiar ground before darkness fell around him.

"Fly well, my Kwen!" he cried again as the speck in the sky circled wider. And then a hoarse exclamation rose from his choking throat. A hawk of the deadliest falcon species was arising determinedly through the sunny air. Wihfred reached for the sling tucked in his leathern belt, and clutched a smooth pebble from the ground. But as he reached for the weapons, he whistled a shrill, piercing imitation of a falconer's call, and when he looked again the big hawk was reluctantly turning from the pursuit of his prey. Wihfred repeated the commanding, insistent call that falconers used to bring back their birds, and he waited with ready sling while the bird swept down behind a pile of headland rocks. Then a boyish voice was raised in anger, and Wihfred quickly made his way to the spot.

"Greetings!" he said to the sullen-faced, blond-haired lad who crouched there hooding the hawk.

As a matter of fact Wihfred was very much alarmed by what he saw. The blond hair and different clothes, and the amulet engraved with runic figures, told him plainly enough that this was one of the feared and hated Norsemen who sometimes landed on the British coast to burn and pillage inland, and kill and capture the inhabitants. Was this lad alone? Wihfred's keen eyes swept from shore line to sea horizon without sighting a Norse sail, and he breathed easier. Looking again at the crouching boy, he read fear and pain in the blue eyes. Then he



knelt with the water-bottle at the lad's parched lips.

"Drink!" he said kindly. "And I'll pack you to where I can fix that smashed leg."

"Torture me not!" cried the stranger, in his own language.

"I can't understand you," replied Wihtred, smiling as he lifted the slender, younger boy in his strong arms.

"Torture me not to death!" repeated the stranger, as Wihtred rudely set and splinted the broken leg when he had carried the lad to a shady, sheltered spot. And again the Saxon lad smiled that he did not understand the words.

Instead of being back on familiar ground when the sun set, Wihtred was broiling a fish over a driftwood fire he had built at the mouth of a cave in which the Norse lad lay on a fragrant seaweed couch. Each morning of the pleasant autumn days that followed, Wihtred managed to carry his injured companion a few miles on his back to another camp nearer the cote, which he would in turn make as comfortable as possible for the Norse boy. Day by day, each learned many words of the other's language, until they were able to easily understand each other. The fear faded from Biorn's blue eyes, and he at last told Wihtred why he had been left alone on that desolate coast.

He explained that it was a combination of punishment and trial of strength. He was a sea-king's son but always sneered at for a weakling among the Norse lads. Several weeks before, he had been purposely left behind at the close of a summer raid on this coast. He was told that the natives would kill him with fearful torture if he were discovered, but if he could escape that and manage to live through the winter, he would be picked up and acclaimed a hero when his father returned the following season. He had subsequently caught and tamed the hawk for companionship and hunting, and then a fall had injured him on the rocky headland where the hawk's flight had led Wihtred to discover him. His greatest wonder was at Wihtred's unexpected kindness.

"I have learned of Jesus from a wise man who sometimes stops at our cote," said Wihtred, gently. "And we who follow Jesus with our hearts do not kill wantonly. If I go to the service with our thane, you shall stay with Leof to care for the goats. There you will be safe and have shelter. And I can hardly wait to know if Kwen made the flight before the sun set that day of trial."

The last morning of their journey, Leof came running to meet them on the stony path, and impatiently demanded his brother's tale.

"I'll keep an eye on Biorn!" he promised.

"Then Kwen flew in before the sun set?" cried Wihtred.

"The hour before," said Leof.

At dawn the next morning Wihtred was ready to start for his service with the thane. He wore a new skin garment belted loosely; and in one hand he carried the rush basket in which Kwen had so often traveled to a tossing-point.

"I shall tell the thane truly how I found you, Biorn, and if he gives permission that you may continue to dwell

with Leof, I will toss Kwen to fly back to the cote. We are loyal lads and would do nothing which might put ourselves or you under suspicion and displeasure of the thane when he learned the truth some other way," said Wihtred. "And when Kwen returns she shall belong to Biorn for always."

"I wait with hope," cried Biorn. "You who follow the way of Jesus are strangely kind."

So Wihtred began his journey down the goatherd trail to the more trodden path of the forest further inland and along the broad highway to the thane's long, low house at the head of the Wessex valley. And at last there came a morning when he went to the house tower with the rush basket and tossed Kwen into the cool, sunny air.

"Fly well with my message!" he cried, when she had eaten sparingly and drank her fill. "Fly well to the stan cote where Leof and Biorn wait to know the thane's will is always kind!"

And after circling slowly the bird started straight away toward the home cote, just a speck against the vividly blue sky. The thane's son, a sturdy lad of his own height, stood by Wihtred's side, and spoke eagerly.

"That means you will stay with us for always! When I am thane you shall be my constant companion, good Wihtred. I promise it!"

"I am now your father's liege servant," said Wihtred, loyally.

It was a long, dark, cold winter, that first which Wihtred served at the thane's house. But he cared not, for they were busy, happy days for him. He helped care for the birds, and he gained wisdom while he held one of the flaring torches used to light the great hall where the thane gave justice and counsel, and he often played with the thane's son in the teeth of the roaring storms.

And then with the springtime came the preparations for defense and the wild warnings that Norsemen had landed on the coast. And during those threatening days Wihtred was busier than ever, training young birds to fly well, tramping long distances with the baskets from which he would toss the young birds.

*(To be continued.)*

## One Basket Piled on Another Basket.

A LEGEND OF OLD PORTUGAL.

BY MARION WILLARD.

**H**OT suds twinkled; soapy bubbles glistened. It was the day to clean the kitchen. With a certain fierce joy Slambango and I attacked the paint. Slambango is my great hope and my greater despair. Her utterly unpronounceable name was abandoned long ago by the neighborhood, who gladly adopted the descriptive compromise, Slambango, given to her by our wittiest and wisest neighbor.

This particular June morning proved to be one of Slambango's approachable days. With her sleeves rolled up, revealing firm brown arms, she splashed and scrubbed. Suddenly her strong white teeth flashed at me as she spied a large basket in the corner of the porch, with two smaller ones inside.

"One basket piled on another basket makes a heap of baskets," she chuckled.

"You know that story? That's an old Portuguese story."

"Long, long, time ago, when Our Lord he choose his disciples, Saint Peter's mother was proud woman, very proud. When she wash her clothes in the river with the other women she was proud. She never speak to the other women. Always she go alone. One day many people are sick, very very sick. When the women go to the river to wash, they go to the mother of Saint Peter. They all go close to her and say: 'Teach us how to pray. When we go to the church we know not what to say. Teach us to pray.'"

"Saint Peter's mother, she so proud that she will not answer the poor women at the river. She does not want them to know how to pray as her son taught her."

"What shall we say when we pray? What shall we say when we pray?" they all ask her very hard, for they are poor and many of them are sick. Then Saint Peter's mother she answer them, and she says: 'When you pray say this, "One basket piled on another basket makes a heap of baskets."'

"Then all the women go away very glad that they have learned to pray."

"Then, long time after that, Saint Peter's mother she die. She go to the gate of Heaven. Christ he does not want her to come in, for she lie to all the poor women. Saint Peter, he ask Our Lord very hard to let his mother into Heaven. Then Christ he say to Saint Peter:

"Let her come in the gate. Then she must stand behind it and see the others. She never can go any more into Heaven than that.' So the mother of Saint Peter always stands near him behind the gate of Heaven. Always she stands there, but never she goes in."

As I slipped away to my dusting in an adjoining room, I heard a crooning little chant:

"One basket piled on another basket makes a heap of baskets."

## Nansen's Carrier Pigeon.

**O**NE day a carrier pigeon tapped at the window of Mrs. Nansen's home in Christiania. Instantly the window was opened and the wife of the famous Arctic explorer in another moment covered a little messenger with kisses and caresses.

The carrier pigeon had been away from the cottage thirty long months, but had not forgotten the way home. It brought a note from Nansen, stating that all was going well with his expedition in the polar regions.

Nansen had fastened a message to the bird and turned it loose.

The frail courier darted out into the blizzard air, flew like an arrow over perhaps a thousand miles of frozen waste and then over another thousand miles of ocean and plains and forests, to enter the window of its waiting mistress and deliver the message which she had been awaiting so anxiously.

We boast of human pluck, sagacity, and endurance; but this loving carrier pigeon, after an absence of thirty months, accomplished a feat so wonderful that we can only give ourselves up to amazement and admiration.

*Nansen's "Arctic Explorations."*



## When Little Barbara Ann went to Bermuda.

BY FRANCES MARGARET FOX.

### PART V.

WHEN it was time for little Barbara Ann to go sailing home to America, she said good-bye to Uncle Peter's friendly cow and to his good old horse; she said good-bye to Uncle Peter's Billy-goat, to his Nanny-goat and to their little kids; she said good-bye to the rabbit, to the cats and the dog, and to her Aunt Susan's parrot that came in a ship from the West Indies; she said good-bye to hens and roosters and the quacking ducks.

The last night she was in Bermuda, Uncle Peter reminded her that she hadn't said good-bye to the whistling frogs nor to the big toads of Bermuda. Barbara Ann laughed; then she climbed on the arm of Uncle Peter's chair and said,

"Please, Uncle Peter, tell me once more the story of the big toads!"

And this is Uncle Peter's story:

"Once upon a time there was a sea-captain who lived in Bermuda. His name was Capt. Nathaniel Vesey. Captain Vesey used to sail between Bermuda and the West Indies. In those days there were no toads nor frogs in Bermuda. Said Captain Vesey to himself, 'We ought to have some frogs in Bermuda to eat the grubs and worms that destroy the growing things in our gardens!'"

"So, without saying a word to anybody, Captain Vesey went on shore one day when his ship was in the West Indies, and packed up some frogs,—that is, he thought they were frogs; he thought too that they were big as they ever would be. When he showed them to the sailors, the sailors thought just what he did.

"When that sea-captain reached home, the first thing he did after he kissed his family and said 'How are you?'—the first thing he did was to turn his frogs loose in the Devonshire marshes.

"And they were not full-grown frogs at all, but little baby West Indian toads! And they grew, and they grew and they grew, until they turned into giant toads, the giant toads of the West Indies!"

"Those huge strangers didn't like the Devonshire marshes, because the water of the marshes is brackish; that means that it is rain-water and salt water mixed. So out they came with their new families born in Bermuda, hundreds and hundreds of huge toads, possibly looking for Captain Vesey!"

"When Captain Vesey saw those giant toads he was the most astonished man who ever trod the deck of a ship! Those toads multiplied so fast and traveled so far that long before Captain Vesey died they were scattered from end to end of the islands.

"One time, so the story goes, when Captain Vesey was home from one of his sailing-trips he heard his front-door bell ring. The captain went to the door. There was no one in sight. On the steps, though, there was a big gunny-sack filled with something that humped and bumped and bumped and humped in a queer way. When the sack was opened, out hopped giant toads—dozens of them! Captain Vesey went in the house, and it is said that he slammed the door."



MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL AT NORTH ANDOVER, MASS., AND ONE OF THE MOTOR-TRUCKS THAT COLLECT THE CHILDREN AND BRING THEM TO THE CHURCH

"I suppose he wished he hadn't brought the first toads over in his ship," Barbara Ann remarked.

"He surely did feel that way about it," agreed Uncle Peter. "Our giant toads belong in the West Indies, but it is too late to send them home. Ordinary toads would have looked better here and would be just as useful."

"And now please tell me about the little whistling frog," begged the child.

So Uncle Peter told Barbara Ann that the little whistling frogs that are sometimes no bigger than a dime must have come to Bermuda from the West Indies with some plants. Anyway they came accidentally, and now they are in Bermuda from end to end, in multitudes. They whistle loud, unmusical whistles from sunset until dawn in some parts of the islands.

"And the English sparrows?" questioned Barbara Ann.

Straightway Uncle Peter told the little girl a long story about the man who brought the English sparrows to Bermuda, until he suddenly stopped because some one in the family said,

"Barbara Ann, it seemed to me just then that the Man in the Bermudian Moon winked at me as much as to say, 'I know one little girl who is sitting up too late.'"

So to bed went Barbara Ann.

Next morning she called good-bye to the whistling frogs in the banana garden; she said good-bye to a most bad-looking giant toad that was big as a dinner-plate; she said good-bye to the trees and the flowers and the coral house where she had been so happy.

After that, away she went driving with Uncle Peter, Aunt Susan, and her mother on the lovely road to Hamilton. To the redbirds, the bluebirds, and the catbirds she said good-bye, and she called good-bye to the dear little ground doves and the pretty little chicks-of-the-village and all the birds she had loved in Bermuda.

At last the little girl was sorry to have to say good-bye to Aunt Susan and Uncle Peter and to the fairy islands of Bermuda.

When the last words had been said for that visit, Barbara Ann and her mother went on board the waiting ship at the steamer landing, and sailed away to New York.

"But after all," said Barbara Ann that night, when she was tucked in her wee, narrow bed in her stateroom on the ship, "after all, there is no place like home. Please sing it."

"You are right about it, Barbara Ann," answered her mother. "East or West, Home is best!" Now cuddle down, if you wish me to sing."

Barbara Ann straightway cuddled down, smiling and happy, to fall quickly asleep when her mother softly hummed "Home, Sweet Home," while the winds and the waves were carrying the ship every minute nearer and nearer home.

Barbara was glad when the ship sailed into New York Harbor and she saw her father and all her family waiting on the pier; and when her big brother waved an American flag, the little sister on the ship called back to him,

"Three cheers for the red, white, and blue!"

## Watching Umbrellas.

BY H. O. SPELMAN.

SOMETIMES when it rains, from the window high

I watch the umbrellas as they pass by.  
I play they are tents of a circus show,  
And the feet show the animals as they go.

Some go hop, hop, like a kangaroo;  
The fox wears a little dainty shoe;  
The widespread feet are a big black bear;  
I find the whole menagerie there.

A boy runs into the mud of the street,  
But most of the shoes are clean and neat;  
I can tell from umbrellas, and shoes, and feet

The kind of people who walk our street.





## THE BEACON CLUB

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.

OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.

OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.

Writing a letter for this corner makes you a member of the Beacon Club. Address, The Beacon Club, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Any club member who has lost his button must send a two-cent stamp when requesting another.

322 DOUGLAS STREET,  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.

Dear Miss Buck,—This year, beginning with September, we opened our Sunday school with about twenty-five enrolled. Since September we have just about doubled ourselves. Not long ago our Sunday school gave a play to help pay for a piano we just bought. The title of the play was "The Quarrel of the Holidays." Each child in the school represented a holiday, or part of one. I was a witch, and led the little kindergarten children, who were dressed up as ghosts to represent Hallowe'en. In the end, Christmas was elected as best of all. I think the play was very interesting, because it brought out some of the significances of days like Memorial Day and Mothers' Day that I had not thought of before.

I have written this because I thought you would like to know how we have changed the size of our church school. I know this can

be done by any school that really wants to and tries hard enough.

I should very much like to have some of the Beacon Club girls write to me. I am fourteen years old and in the first year of high school. I am very fond of outdoor sports.

With best wishes for the success of the Club, I am,

Yours sincerely,  
MARY W. SHIELDS.

433 COLLEGE AVENUE,  
LANCASTER, PA.

Dear Miss Buck,—I go to the Unitarian church in Lancaster. Mr. Davis is our minister. There are a good many in our Sunday School and we are very proud of it. I read *The Beacon* every time it comes. I like it very much, and would like to be a member of the Club.

With very much love,  
DOROTHY KNIGHT.

Other new members of our Club are Arthur B. West, Long Beach, Calif.; David Dunning, Colorado Springs, Col.; Lee Washburn, Augusta, Me.; Merwyn Forster, New York, N.Y.; Mildred and Miriam Stillinger, Lancaster, Pa.; Mary Agnes Wilson, Northside, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Barbara Havenor, Salt Lake City, Utah.

### A Gossip Transformer.

BY ELLEN C. LLORAS.

"COME here, I want to tell you something," called Louise, and the girls flocked around. Listening intently with heads together for a few minutes, they made a giggling rush for their wraps and the door. From the window I saw them pile excitedly into a waiting car and drive off.

"What's up now?" I wanted to know.

"Why, Louise has discovered a regular fairy godmother right in our midst," explained Mrs. Martin, "and it's the most unexpected person in the world. You know the crabbed old lady you met last winter. Well, that's the one. It seems that back of all her crabbedness was the need of a niece's family away from here, and to them she was giving every ounce of strength and every penny she could save. But she's thawed out considerably under Louise's ministrations, and we're really growing quite fond of her. The girls have gone out now to give her a little birthday surprise, and her delightful bit of gossip was that she really had the niece and babies all here for the celebration.

"That's always the kind of gossip you hear from Louise's lips," continued Mrs. Martin. "She always has something to tell, but it's always something nice. She never seems to know if there are ugly and disagreeable things in the world, but she's always pouncing on some especially delightful thing. Heads together in a corner at her call usually mean something good on foot—not an ugly tale at all. She certainly is a gossip transformer."

Watch for the new heading to our paper. It's coming soon.

### Honor Roll.

The *Beacon* will publish, under this heading, names of pupils in our church schools who secure new members for their school. We are making a united effort the country over to enlarge the attendance and interest in the Unitarian church schools, and good reports are coming to us of the work the children themselves are doing. Superintendents or other officers of the school, or teachers, are asked to furnish us names for this Honor Roll.

In addition to the names thus far published, we add the following from the school of the Fourth Unitarian Church, Brooklyn, New York:

Jean Badger.	Trafton Badger.
Helen Ferguson.	Vienna Gano.
Estelle Gerrodette.	Elinor Hayden.
Frances Little.	Mabel McClammon.
Ruth Sornner.	Ruth Williams.
Margaret Williams.	Agnes Pearson.
Janet Nilbrugge.	

### Church School News.

THE Boston Young Men's Christian Union, which is an alliance of young men of the liberal churches of the city, gave its forty-eighth annual Christmas festival this year to seven hundred boys and girls. Every seat in the large hall on Boylston Street was filled at two o'clock on December 17, when the President of the Union, Frank L. Locke, welcomed the guests. The children sang the Christmas carols with a will, led by the orchestra. When Santa Claus appeared he was greeted with a great shout, and the Christmas tree lighted by electricity was much enjoyed. Motion pictures followed, and ice-cream and cake were served. In addition to a box of substantial clothing, each child received a toy. This celebration and these gifts were made possible by the generosity of the Union and its friends.

## RECREATION CORNER

### ENIGMA XXXIX.

I am composed of 19 letters.  
My 7, 12, 9, 10, is where boats can go.  
My 17, 4, 12, 18, is a metal.  
My 4, 8, 9, 10, is where to put your coat.  
My 15, 8, 6, is a color.  
My 9, 1, 4, 15, is a sort of wagon.  
My 19, 15, 1, 3, 14, is a spot.  
My 16, 18, 15, is an insect.  
My 11, 5, 13, 18, 2, is a pile or heap.  
My whole is the name of a range of mountains in New York State.

I. O.

### ENIGMA XL.

I am composed of 14 letters and my whole is a parable.  
My 9, 8, 5, 11, is not a brother.  
My 12, 6, 10, 4, is what most boys hate to use.  
My 11, 3, 14, 7, is to allow another to take with expectation of return.  
My 13, 10, 1, 2, is a declaration.

KATHERINE ADAMS.

### A FLIGHT-OF-STAIRS PUZZLE.

Each word is composed of four letters, the last three letters of each being the first three of the following word.

1. A heavenly body.
2. A weed.
3. An open space; surface.
4. The end of a line of soldiers.
5. To obtain by labor.
6. A river of Italy.

E. S. C.

### REVERSIBLE WORDS

1. Read forward, a portion; read backward, to ensnare.
2. Forward, a market; backward, a railway.
3. Forward, a series of years; backward, part of the verb "to be."
4. Forward, a pause; backward, a boy's toy.
5. Forward, part of a house; backward, a lonely field.
6. Forward, wrong-doing; backward, to exist.

E. O. S.

### ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NO. 19.

ENIGMA XXXV.—The longest way round is the shortest way home.

ENIGMA XXXVI.—Be not wise in thine own eyes.

BEHEADINGS.—1. B-car. 2. C-ream. 3. S-tray. 4. C-hair. 5. T-able. 6. C-I-ever.

ANAGRAM COUPLET.—Dare to be true, nothing can need a lie;  
A fault which needs it most grows two thereby.

## THE BEACON

REV. FLORENCE BUCK, Editor

Issued weekly from the first Sunday of October to the first Sunday of June, inclusive



PUBLISHED BY  
THE BEACON PRESS, Inc.  
25 Beacon St., Boston, Mass.

May also be secured from  
21 E. 38th St., New York  
105 S. Dearborn St., Chicago  
570 Phelan Bldg., San Francisco  
Subscription Price: Single subscriptions, 60 cents. In packages to schools, 50 cents.

Entered at the Boston Post-office as second-class mail matter.

Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on September 13, 1918.

Printed in Boston, U.S.A. Press of Geo. H. Ellis Co. (Inc.)